Series One:
Essays on Wit

No. 3

John Gay, *The Present State of Wit* (1711)

With an Introduction by
Donald F. Bond

and

a Bibliographical Note

and

Excerpts from *The English Theophrastus: or the Manners of the Age* (1702)

With an Introduction by
W. Earl Britton

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THE Present State OF WIT, IN A LETTER TO A Friend in the Country.

LONDON
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(Price 3 d.)

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

Gay's concern in his survey of The Present State of Wit is with the productions of wit which were circulating among the coffee-houses of 1711, specifically the large numbers of periodical essays which were perhaps the most distinctive kind of "wit" produced in the "four last years" of Queen Anne's reign. His little pamphlet makes no pretence at an analysis of true and false wit or a refining of critical distinctions with regard to wit in its relations to fancy and judgment. Addressed to "a friend in the country," it surveys in a rapid and engaging manner the productions of Isaac Bickerstaff and his followers which are engrossing the interest of London. In other words it is an early example of a popular eighteenth-century form, of which Goldsmith's more extended Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning is the best known instance.

As such it well deserves a place in the Augustan Reprints series on wit. It has been reproduced before in this century, in An English Garner: Critical Essays and Literary Fragments (Westminster, 1903, pp. 201-10), with an attractive and informative introduction by J. Churton Collins. More information, however, is now at our disposal in the forty year interval since Collins wrote, both in regard to John Gay and to the bibliography of periodical literature in Queen Anne's time. Furthermore, the Arber reprint is difficult to obtain.

Gay is writing, he tells us, without prejudice "either for Whig or Tory," but the warm praise which he extends to Steele and Addison makes his pamphlet sound like the criticism of one very close to the Whigs. Though Gay is ordinarily associated with the Tory circle of Swift and Pope, he was in 1711 still in the somewhat uncertain position of a youngster willing to be courted by

either group. His earliest sympathies were if anything on the side of the Whigs, in spite of the turn of events in the autumn of 1710. Gay's interests in these early years are nowhere so well analyzed as in the early pages of W. H. Irving's John Gay: Favorite of the Wits (Durham, N.C., 1940): cf. the title of the second chapter: "Direction Found -- the Year 1713." Even as late as 1715 Swift apparently thought of him as a Whig (Swift's Letters, ed. Ball, II, 286, cited by Irving, p. 91).

One need not be surprised, then, to find Gay eulogizing Captain Steele as "the greatest scholar and best casuist of any man in England," an essayist whose writings "have set all our wits and men of letters on a new way of thinking." Swift's reaction is well known. "Dr. Freind was with me," he writes to Stella on May 14th, "and pulled out a two-penny pamphlet just published, called, The State of Wit, giving a character of all the papers that have come out of late. The author seems to be a Whig, yet he speaks very highly of a paper called the Examiner, and says the supposed author of it is Dr. Swift. But above all things he praises the Tatlers and Spectators; and I believe Steele and Addison were privy to the printing of it. Thus is one treated by these impudent dogs" (Journal to Stella, ed. J. K. Moorhead, Everyman's Library, p. 168).

In addition to the Tatler and Spectator Gay discusses a dozen other periodical publications which are of some interest to-day. Dr. King's "monthly Philosophical Transactions," mentioned in the third paragraph, had begun as a parody of the Royal Society's publications, but they had failed to hold the public interest, in spite of the wit of the author of the Art of Cookery: "though that gentleman has a world of wit..., the town soon grew weary of his

writings." King's Useful Transactions in Philosophy had in fact run to only three numbers in the early months of 1709. The Monthly Amusement of John Ozell, mentioned in the following paragraph, which Churton Collins erroneously considered to be not a periodical but "simply his frequent appearances as a translator" (p. xxxii) -- a statement repeated by Lewis Melville in his Life and Letters of John Gay (London, 1921, p. 12) -- ran for only six numbers, from April to September 1709. Gay's statement that it "is still continued" may refer to the better known Delights for the Ingenious; or a Monthly Entertainment for the Curious of Both Sexes (edited by John Tipper) which was currently appearing in 1711.

As to the political papers Gay's observations are moderate in tone. Defoe's Review (1704-13) and The Observator (1702-12), begun by John Tutchin, are noticed in rather supercilious fashion. The Examiner (1710-14) is damned with faint praise: though "all men, who speak without prejudice, allow it to be well written" and "under the eye of some great persons who sit at the helm of affairs," Gay's admiration is reserved for its two chief opponents, Addison's short-lived Whig Examiner (1710) and The Medley (1710-12).

The real hero of the pamphlet, however, is Richard Steele, with his coadjutor Mr. Addison, "whose works in Latin and English poetry long since convinced the world, that he was the greatest master in Europe of those two languages." The high praise which Gay lavishes upon this pair -- comparable in their own field, he says, to Lord Somers and the Earl of Halifax -- is eloquent testimony to the immense interest aroused by their two papers in the London of 1709-12. There is no need to review here the particulars of Gay's eulogy, but one or two points may be noted. In the first place, Gay's remarks are not extravagant when compared with other contemporary testimony. Many of these tributes were brought

together by Aitken in his monumental biography of Steele, and since 1889 other contemporary sources have been published which give corroborating support. Hearne first mentions the Spectator on April 22, 1711, in a comment on No. 43, and even this crusty Tory and Jacobite notes in his diary: "But Men that are indifferent commend it highly, as it deserves" (Remarks and Collections, ed. Doble, III, Oxford, 1895, p. 154). The published reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, too, contain many contemporary references (see, e.g., Manuscripts of the Hon. Frederick Lindley Wood (1913), p. 247; Manuscripts of the Marquess of Downshire, I (1924), 889). It is interesting to observe, further, that Gay makes no reference to the political prejudices of the Spectator though it was not without criticism at the time for its meddling in politics. The Plain Dealer of May 24, 1712, for example, objected to the publication of No. 384 (the reprinting of the Bishop of St. Asaph's Introduction to his Sermons) and hinted at a "Mercenary Consideration" behind this sorry attempt to "propagate ill Principles." Gay's attitude on this point would be another reason for Swift's dislike of the pamphlet.

The "continuations" of the Tatler are given due attention by Gay, as well as three of its imitators: The Grouler (6 numbers, 1711), The Whisperer (one number, 1709), and The Tell Tale, which may be The Tatling Harlot (3 numbers, 1709), or, as Churton Collins conjectured, The Female Tatler (1709-10). Gay's postscript makes an agreeable reference to The British Apollo (1708-11), which has "of late, retreated out of this end of the town into the country," where "it still recommends itself by deciding wagers at cards, and giving good advice to shopkeepers and their apprentices," an interesting comment in view of Gay's own possible connection with this journal (cf. Irving, pp. 40-56). It is these

casual remarks, as well as the more extensive critical comments on the present state of "wit," which give Gay's pamphlet a permanent interest.

The typescript copy of the Present State of Wit is taken from the pamphlet owned by the Henry E. Huntington Library.

Donald F. Bond

University of Chicago

THE
PRESENT STATE
of
WIT, &c.

SIR,

YOU Acquaint me in your last, that you are still so busie Building at -----, that your Friends must not hope to see you in Town this Year: At the same time you desire me that you may not be quite at a loss in Conversation among the Beau Monde next Winter, to send you an account of the present State of Wit in Town; which, without further Preface, I shall therefore endeavour to perform, and give you the Histories and Characters of all our Periodical Papers, whether Monthly, Weekly, or Diurnal, with the same freedom I used to send you our other Town News.

I shall only premise, that as you know I never cared one Farthing either for Whig or Tory, So I shall consider our Writers purely as they are such, without any respect to which Party they may belong.

Dr. King has for some time lain down his MONTHLY PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSACTIONS, which the Title Page informed us at first, were only to be continued as they Sold; and tho' that Gentleman has a World of Wit, yet as it lies in one particular way of Raillery, the Town soon grew weary of his Writings; tho' I cannot but think, that their Author deserves a much better Fate, than to Languish out the small remainder of his Life in the Fleet Prison.

About the same time that the Doctor left off Writing, one Mr. Ozell put out his MONTHLY AMUSEMENT, (which is still continued) and as it is generally some French Novel or Play indifferently Translated, is more or less taken Notice of, as the Original Piece is more or less Agreeable.

As to our Weekly Papers, the Poor REVIEW is quite exhausted, and grown so very Contemptible, that tho' he has provoked all his Brothers of the Quill round, none of them will enter into a Controversy with him. This Fellow, who had excellent Natural Parts, but wanted a small Foundation of Learning, is a lively instance of those Wits, who, as an Ingenious Author says, will endure but one Skimming.

The OBSERVATOR was almost in the same Condition, but since our Party-Struggles have run so high, he is much mended for the better; which is imputed to the Charitable Assistance of some out-lying Friends.

These Two Authors might, however, have flourish'd some time longer, had not the Controversie been taken up by much abler Hands.

The EXAMINER is a Paper, which all Men, who speak without Prejudice, allow to be well Writ. Tho' his Subject will admit of no great Variety, he is continually placing it on so many different Lights, and endeavouring to inculcate the same thing by so many Beautiful Changes of Expressions, that Men, who are concern'd in no Party, may Read him with Pleasure. His way of assuming the Question in Debate, is extremely Artful; and his Letter to Crassus, is, I think, a Master-piece. As these Papers are suppos'd to have been Writ by several Hands, the Criticks will tell you, That they can discern a difference in their Stiles and Beauties, and pretend to observe, that the first EXAMINERS abound chiefly in Wit, the last in Humour.

Soon after their first appearance, came out a Paper from the other Side, called the WHIG EXAMINER, writ with so much Fire, and in so excellent a Stile, as put the Tories in no small pain for their favourite Hero, every one cry'd Bickerstaff must be the Author, and People were the more confirm'd in this opinion, upon its being so soon lay'd down; which seem'd to shew, that it was only writ to bind the EXAMINERS to their good Behaviour, and was never design'd to be a Weekly Paper. The EXAMINERS therefore have no one to Combat with at present, but their Friend the MEDLEY; The Author of which Paper, tho' he seems to be a Man of good Sense, and expresses it luckily enough now and then, is, I think, for the most part, perfectly a Stranger to fine Writing.

I presume I need not tell you that the EXAMINER carries much the more Sail, as 'tis supposed to be writ by the Direction, and under the Eye of some Great Persons who sit at the helm of Affairs, and is consequently look'd on as a sort of publick Notice which way they are steering us.

The reputed Author is Dr. S---t, with the assistance, sometimes, of Dr. Att---y, and Mr. P---r.

The MEDLEY, is said to be Writ by Mr. Old---n, and supervised by Mr. Mayn---g, who perhaps might intirely write those few Papers which are so much better than the rest.

Before I proceed further in the account of our Weekly Papers, it will be necessary to inform you, that at the beginning of the Winter, to the infinite surprize of all Men, Mr. Steele flung up His TATLER, and instead of Isaac Bickerstaff Esq; Subscrib'd himself Richard Steele to the last of those Papers, after an handsome Compliment to the Town for their kind acceptance of his Endeavours to divert them. The Chief

Reason he thought fit to give for his leaving off writing, was, that having been so long look'd on in all publick Places and Companies as the Author of those Papers, he found that his most intimate Friends and Acquaintance were in Pain to Act or Speak before him. The Town was very far from being satisfied with this Reason; and most People judg'd the true cause to be, either that he was quite spent, and wanted matter to continue his undertaking any longer, or that he lay'd it down as a sort of Submission to, and Composition with the Government for some past Offences; Or lastly, that he had a Mind to vary his Shape, and appear again in some new Light.

However that were, his disappearing seem'd to be bewailed as some general Calamity, every one wanted so agreeable an Amusement, and the Coffee-houses began to be sensible that the Esquires Lucubrations alone, had brought them more Customers than all their other News Papers put together.

It must indeed be confess'd, that never Man threw up his Pen under Stronger Temptations to have imployed it longer: His Reputation was at a greater height than, I believe, ever any living Author's was before him. 'Tis reasonable to suppose that his Gains were proportionably considerable; Every one Read him with Pleasure and Good Will, and the Tories, in respect to his other Good Qualities, had almost forgiven his unaccountable Imprudence in declaring against them.

Lastly, It was highly improbable that if he threw off a Character, the Ideas of which were so strongly impress'd in every one's mind, however finely he might write in any new form, that he should meet with the same reception.

To give you my own thoughts of this Gentleman's Writings, I shall in the first place observe, that there is this noble difference between him and all the rest of our Polite and Gallant Authors: The latter have endeavour'd to please the Age by falling in with them, and incouraging them in their fashionable Vices, and false notions of things. It would have been a jest, sometime since, for a Man to have asserted, that any thing Witty could be said in praise of a Marry'd State, or that Devotion and Virtue were any way necessary to the Character of a fine Gentleman. Bickerstaff ventur'd to tell the Town, that they were a parcel of Fops, Fools, and vain Cocquets; but in such a manner, as even pleased them, and made them more than half enclin'd to believe that he spoke Truth.

Instead of complying with the false Sentiments or Vicious tasts of the Age, either in Morality, Criticism, or Good Breeding, he has boldly assur'd them, that they were altogether in the wrong, and commanded them with an Authority, which perfectly well became him, to surrender themselves to

his Arguments, for Vertue and Good Sense.

'Tis incredible to conceive the effect his Writings have had on the Town; How many Thousand follies they have either quite banish'd, or given a very great check to; how much Countenance they have added to Vertue and Religion; how many People they have render'd happy, by shewing them it was their own fault if they were not so; and lastly, how intirely they have convinc'd our Fops, and Young Fellows, of the value and advantages of Learning.

He has indeed rescued it out of the hands of Pedants and Fools, and discover'd the true method of making it amiable and lovely to all mankind: In the dress he gives it, 'tis a most welcome guest at Tea-tables and Assemblies, and is relish'd and caressed by the Merchants on the Change; accordingly, there is not a Lady at Court, nor a Banker in Lumbard-Street, who is not verily perswaded, that Captain Steele is the greatest Scholar, and best Casuist, of any Man in England.

Lastly, His Writings have set all our Wits and Men of Letters upon a new way of Thinking, of which they had little or no Notion before; and tho' we cannot yet say that any of them have come up to the Beauties of the Original, I think we may venture to affirm, that every one of them Writes and Thinks much more justly than they did some time since.

The vast variety of Subjects which he has treated of in so different manners, and yet All so perfectly well, made the World believe that 'twas impossible they should all come from the same hand. This set every one upon guessing who was the Esquires Friend, and most people at first fancied it must be Dr. Swift; but it is now no longer a Secret, that his only great and constant assistant was Mr. Addison.

This is that excellent Friend to whom Mr. Steele ow's so much, and who refuses to have his Name set before those Pieces, which the greatest Pens in England would be Proud to own. Indeed, they could hardly add to this Gentleman's Reputation, whose Works in Latin and English Poetry, long since convinc'd the World, that he was the greatest Master in Europe of those Two Languages.

I am assur'd from good hands, That all the Visions, and other Tracts in that way of Writing, with a very great number of the most exquisite Pieces of Wit and Raillery throughout the Lucubrations, are intirely of this Gentleman's Composing; which may in some Measure account for that different Genius, which appears in the Winter Papers from those of the Summer; at which time, as the EXAMINER often hinted, this Friend of Mr. Steele's was in Ireland.

Mr. Steele confesses in his last Volume of the TATLERS, that he is oblig'd to Dr. Swift for his "Town Shower," and the "Description of the Morn," with some other hints received from him in Private Conversation.

I have also heard, that several of those Letters, which came as from Unknown Hands, were writ by Mr. Henly; which is an Answer to your Query, Who those Friends are, whom Mr. Steele speaks of in his last TATLER?

But to proceed with my account of our other Papers: The Expiration of Bickerstaff's Lucubrations, was attended with much the same Consequences as the Death of Melibæus's Ox in Virgil; as the latter engendred Swarms of Bees, the former immediately produc'd whole Swarms of little Satyrical Scriblers.

One of these Authors, call'd himself The GROWLER, and assur'd us, that to make amends for Mr. Steel's Silence, he was resolv'd to Growl at us Weekly, as long as we should think fit to give him any Encouragement. Another Gentleman, with more Modesty, call'd his Paper The WHISPERER; and a Third, to Please the Ladies, Christen'd his, The TELL-TALE.

At the same time came out several TATLERS; each of which, with equal Truth and Wit, assur'd us, That he was the Genuine Isaac Bickerstaff.

It may be observ'd, That when the Esquire laid down his Pen, tho' he could not but foresee that several Scriblers would soon snatch it up, which he might, one would think, easily have prevented, he Scorn'd to take any further Care about it, but left the Field fairly open to any Worthy Successor. Immediately some of our Wits were for forming themselves into a Club, headed by one Mr. Harrison, and trying how they could shoot in this Bow of Ulysses; but soon found that this sort of Writing, requires so fine and particular a manner of Thinking, with so exact a Knowledge of the World, as must make them utterly Despair of Success.

They seem'd indeed at first to think, that what was only the Garnish of the former TATLERS, was that which recomended them, and not those Substantial Entertainments which they every where abound in.

According they were continually talking of their Maid, Night-Cap, Spectacles, and Charles Lillie. However there were now and then some faint endeavours at Humour and Sparks of Wit, which the Town, for want of better Entertainment, was content to hunt after, through an heap of Impertinencies; but even those are at present, become wholly invisible, and quite swallow'd up in the Blaze of the SPECTATOR.

You may remember I told you before, that one Cause assign'd for the laying down the TATLER was, want of Matter; and indeed this was the prevailing Opinion in Town, when we were Surpriz'd all at once by a Paper called The SPECTATOR, which was promised to be continued every day, and was writ in so excellent a Stile, with so nice a Judgment, and such a noble profusion of Wit and Humour, that it was not difficult to determine it could come from no other hands but those which had penn'd the Lucubrations.

This immediately alarm'd these Gentlemen, who (as 'tis said Mr. Steele phrases it) had The Censorship in Commission. They found the new SPECTATOR come on like a Torrent and swept away all before him; they despaired ever to equal him in Wit, Humour, or Learning; (which had been their true and certain way of opposing him) and therefore, rather chose to fall on the Author, and to call out for help to all Good Christians, by assuring them again and again, that they were the First, Original, True, and Undisputed Isaac Bickerstaff.

Mean while The SPECTATOR, whom we regard as our shelter from that Flood of False Wit and Impertinence which was breaking in upon us, is in every ones Hand, and a constant Topick for our Morning Conversation at Tea-Tables, and Coffee-Houses. We had at first indeed no manner of Notion, how a Diurnal Paper could be continu'd in the Spirit and Stile of our present SPECTATORS; but to our no small Surprize, we find them still rising upon us, and can only wonder from whence so Prodigious a Run of Wit and Learning can proceed; since some of our best Judges seem to think that they have hitherto, in general, out-shone even the Esquires first TATLERS.

Most People Fancy, from their frequency, that they must be compos'd by a Society; I, with all, Assign the first places to Mr. Steele and His Friend.

I have often thought that the Conjunction of those two Great Genius's (who seem to stand in a Class by themselves, so high above all our other Wits) resembled that of two famous States-men in a late Reign, whose Characters are very well expressed in their two Mottoes (viz.) Prodesse quam conspici, and Otium cum Dignitate. Accordingly the first was continually at work behind the Curtain, drew up and prepared all those Schemes and Designs, which the latter Still drove on, and stood out exposed to the World to receive its Praises or Censures.

Mean time, all our unbyassed well-wishers to Learning, are in hopes, that the known Temper and Prudence of one of these Gentlemen, will hinder the other from ever lashing out into Party, and rend'ring that wit which is at present a Common Good, Odious and Ungrateful to the better part of the Nation.

If this piece of imprudence do's not spoil so excellent a Paper, I propose to my self, the highest Satisfaction, in Reading it with you over a Dish of Tea, every Morning next Winter.

As we have yet had nothing new since the SPECTATOR, it only remains for me to assure you, that I am

Yours, &c.

J. G.

Westminster,
May 3. 1711.

P O S T C R I P T.

Upon a Review of my Letter, I find I have quite forgot The BRITISH APOLLO; which might possibly happen, from its having of late Retreated out of this end of the Town into the City; where I am inform'd however, That it still recommends itself by deciding Wagers at Cards, and giving good Advice to Shop-keepers, and their Apprentices.

F I N I S.

The / Present State / of / Wit, / in a /
Letter / to a / Friend in the Country. /
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This appears to be the only contemporary edition.

Colton Storm

THE

English Theophraſtus:

OR, THE

Manners of the Age.

Being the

MODERN CHARACTERS

OF THE *OF THE*

COURT, the TOWN, and the CITY.

Quicquid agunt Homines, Votum, Timor, Ira, Voluptas, Gaudia, Diſcurſus, noſtri eſt Farrago, Libelli.

Juven.

——*Quis enim Virtutem amplectitur ipſam?*

Id.

LONDON,

Printed for *W. Turner*, at *Lincolns-Inn Back-Gate*; *R. Baſſet* in *Fleetſtreet*; and *J. Chantry*, without *Temple Bar*, 1702

INTRODUCTION

Abel Boyer, a Huguenot who settled in London in 1689, devoted himself to language, history, and literature. As a linguist, he tutored Allen Bathurst and the Duke of Gloucester in French, prepared a textbook for English students of French, compiled a French and English dictionary, and endeavored to promote a better understanding between France and England by translating works of each nation into the language of the other. As a historian, he recorded the principal events of English national life from 1688 to 1729. As a literary figure, he wrote a play that was approved by Dryden and published two collections of characters.

Coming in on the great flood of character books which reached its crest in the seventeenth century, Boyer's collections were part of the final surge before the character was taken over by Steele and handed on to the novelists. The first was Characters of the Virtues and Vices of the Age; or, Moral reflections, maxims, and thoughts upon men and manners. Translated from the most refined French wits... and extracted from the most celebrated English writers.... Digested alphabetically under proper titles (1695). The second, resembling the first in design but considerably enlarged, was published in 1702 under the title The English Theophrastus: Or The Manners of the Age. Being the Modern Characters Of The Court, the Town, and the City. No author is given on the title page, but the work is usually ascribed to Boyer because his name appears beneath the dedication.

That Boyer's purpose in preparing The English Theophrastus was moral is evident in the preface, where he describes the subject of his book as the "Grand-Lesson, deliver'd by the Delphian Oracle, Know thy Self: Which certainly is the most important of a Man's Life." Distempers of the mind, he continues, like those of the body, are half cured when well known. Although philosophers of all ages have agreed in their aim to expose human imperfections in order to rectify them, their methods have differed. Those moralists who have inveighed magisterially against man's vices generally have been "abandon'd to the ill-bred Teachers of Musty Morals in Schools, or to the sowr Pulpit-Orators." Those who, by "nipping Strokes of a Side-wind Satyr, have endeavour'd to tickle Men out of their Follies," have been welcomed and caressed by the very people who were most abused. Since self-love waves the application, satire, unless bluntly direct, can fail as completely as reprehension.

Modern moralists, according to Boyer, have pursued a third course and cast their observations on men and manners into the entertaining form employed by Theophrastus, Lucian, Plutarch, and Diogenes Laertius. Among the moderns, La Rochefoucauld, Saint-Evremond, and La Bruyère are admired by all judicious readers. From these French writers Boyer has selected materials for the groundwork of his collection. He has added passages from Antoninus, Pascal, and Gratian; from the English authors Bacon, Cowley, L'Estrange, Raleigh, Temple, Dryden, Wycherley,

Brown and others; and from his own pen. They range from a single line to a passage of several pages. Those of English origin are distinguished by "an Asterism," his own remarks by inverted commas. Other matter is unmarked.

Although Boyer has used as his title The English Theophrastus, examination of the sections here reprinted will show that he has departed from the way of the Greek master. Instead of sharply defined portraits, Boyer offers maxims, reflections, and manners, after the French pattern. Gathered from a variety of sources, these observations are sometimes related to one another only by their common subject matter, but often they have been altered and rearranged by Boyer for sharper focus and unity. A few examples will make his method clear.

Of the paragraphs that begin on page eight of the first selection, the second and fourth are taken from An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex (1696), perhaps the work of Mrs. Judith Drake. The first of these is the last half of a paragraph from Drake, but minus her concluding figure, "as Fleas are said to molest those most, who have the tenderest Skins, and the sweetest Blood"(p.78). Into the first line of the second paragraph from Drake, "Of these the most voluminous Fool is the Fop Poet," Boyer inserts a reference to Will's. Thereafter, he follows Drake rather closely, but replaces the final portion of the paragraph with two or three sentences from other parts of her essay. The Drake material ends at the

paragraph break on page nine. Between these two paragraphs Boyer places the single statement, "There's somewhat that borders upon Madness in every exalted Wit," which may be his own version of Dryden's line, "Great Wits are sure to Madness near allied" (Absalom and Achitophel,l.248). By means of these alterations in his sources, Boyer has compiled a passage that has focus and direction, and gives little evidence of its patchwork origin.

In other instances Boyer adheres more closely to the original form of the material he borrows. The long passage from the middle of page twenty to the middle of twenty-five is taken from "Des Ouvrages de L'Esprit" of La Bruyère's Les Caractères. Though retaining the sequence of these observations, he has deleted certain paragraphs. In most cases he has translated the French faithfully, but here and there he has paraphrased a passage or added a brief remark of his own. There was little he could do, of course, with La Rochefoucauld, from whose Maximes all of page 282 and about half of 283 of the second selection are taken. Boyer was content to translate almost literally these remarks upon wit and judgment which he collected from widely scattered sections of the Maximes.

Boyer's own contribution to his collection was slight, covering, all told, little more than fifteen of the 383 pages. Distinguished neither by originality of conception nor individuality of style, it is, nevertheless, marked by good sense. A moderate man in his pronouncements, Boyer was less clever

than reasonable.

Boyer's remarks on wit are in keeping with his character. Like many of his contemporaries, he has something to say on the subject, but uses the term rather loosely. He would seem, though, to identify wit with genius, which gives evidence of itself in literary utterance. But judgment is a necessary concomitant of good wit. Conversely, the would-be wit lacks genius, expression, and judgment, and therefore turns critic, that he may denounce in others what is not to be found in himself. Hence the word critic has come to mean a fault finder rather than a man of sound judgment.

The following selections are reproduced, with permission, from a copy of The English Theophrastus in the library of the University of Michigan.

W.Earl Britton

University of Michigan

THE MANNERS Of the AGE.

Authors, Wits, Poets, Criticks, Will's *Coffee-House, Play-House,* &c.

EUBULUS fancying himself Inspir'd, "stands up for the Honour of Poetry, "and is mightily provok'd to hear the "Sacred Name of *Poet*, turn'd into "Scandal and Ridicule; He tells you "what a profound Veneration the "*Athenians* had for their Dramatick Writers; how "greatly *Terence* and *Virgil* were Honour'd in *Rome*; "the first, by *Scipio* and *Lælius*, the other by *Au-* "*gustus* and *Mecænas*; how much *Francis* the First, "and Cardinal *Richelieu*, encourag'd the Wits of "*France*; and drawing his Argument more home, "he relates to you, how in this Island the *Bucking-* "*hams*, the *Orrerys*, the *Roscommons*, the *Normanbys*, "the *Dorsets*, the *Hallifaxs*, and several other Illustri- "ous Persons have not only encouraged Poetry, but "ennobled the Art it self by their Performances.

" True *Eubulus*; we allow Poetry to be a Divine " Art, and the name of *Poet* to be *Sacred* and Ho- " nourable, when a *Sophocles*, a *Terence*, a *Virgil*, " a *Corneille*, a *Boileau*, a *Shakeſpear*, a *Waller*, a " *Dryden*, a *Wycherly*, a *Congreve*, or a *Garth* bears " it: But then we intend it as a Scandal, when we " give it to *Mævius*, *Chapelain*, *Ogilby*, W—— " D——, D——, S——, and *your ſelf*.

" I queſtion whether ſome Poets allow any other " Poets to have Perform'd better than themſelves, in that kind of Poetry which they profeſs. Sir " *R----- B-----*, I ſuppoſe, tho' he has declaim'd a- " gainſt Wit, yet is not ſo conceited, as to Vie " with *Horace* and *Juvenal* for *Satyr*; but as to " *Heroick Poetry*, methinks he Reaſons thus with " himſelf; *Homer* has writ the *Ilias* and the *Odyſſeis*, " and *Virgil* only the *Æneid*; I have writ *Prince* " *Arthur*, and *King Arthur*; am I not then equal " to *Homer*, and Superior to *Virgil*? No, *B----re*, " we judge of *Poetry* as we do of *Metals*, not by " the *Lump*, but the intrinſick Value. New caſt " your Poems, purge 'em of their Droſs, reduce " 'em to the Bulk of the *Diſpenſary*, and if then " they weigh in the Balance with *that*, we will " allow you a Place among the Firſt-Rate *Heroick* " *Poets*.

" The *Wits* of mean Deſcent and ſcanty Fortune, " are generally apt to reflect on Perſons of " Quality and Eſtates, whom they raſhly tax with " Dullneſs and Ignorance, a *Normanby*, a *Dorſet*, a " *Spencer*, a *Halliſax*, a *Boyle*, a *Stanhope*, and a *Cod-* " *rington*, (to paſs over abundance more) are ſuffi- " cient to convince the World, that either an Illu- " ſtrious Birth, or vaſt Riches, are not incompati- " ble with *deep Learning*, and *Sterling-Wit*.

Rapin

" *Rapin*, St. *Evremont*, and ſome other *French* " Criticks, do the *Engliſh* wrong, in the Judgments " they paſs upon their Plays: The *Engliſh* Criticks " are even with them, for generally they judge as " *ill* of *French* Poetry.

" There is a great reach of Diſcernment, a deep " Knowledge, and abundance of Candor requir'd " to qualifie a Man for an *equal Judge* of the Poe- " try and ingenious Compoſitions of two Nations, " whoſe *Tempers*, *Humours*, *Manners*, *Cuſtoms*, and " *Taſtes*, are ſo vaſtly different as the *French* are " from the *Engliſh*: *Rapin*, St. *Evremont*, and *Rymer*, " are *candid*, *judicious*, and *learned* Criticks, I own " it; but yet neither the two firſt are ſufficiently " acquainted with *England*, nor the latter with " *France*, to enter equally into the Genius of both " Nations; and conſequently they cannot paſs a " juſt Sentence upon the Performances of their re- " ſpective Writers.

" 'Tis a great piece of Injuſtice in us, to charge " the *French* with Fickleneſs; for, to give them " their due, They are ten times more conſtant in " their Judgments, than we; Their *Cid* and *Iphige-* " *nia* in *Aulis*, are Acted at this very day, with as " much Applauſe as they were thirty Years ago: " All *London* has admir'd the *Mourning Bride* one " Winter, and endeavour'd to find fault with it " the next.

" *Philo* comes *piping hot* out of the College, and " having his Head full of Poetical Gingles, writes " an *Elegy*, a *Panegyrick*, or a *Satyr* upon the leaſt fri- " volous Occaſion: This brings him acquainted " with all the *Second-Rate Wits*; One of theſe in- " troduces him at *Will*'s, and having a Play upon " the Stocks, and ready to be Launch'd, he pre- " vails with *Philo* to write him a *Song*, a *Dialogue*,

" a *Prologue* and *Epilogue*; in ſhort, the Trimming " of his Comedy. By this time, *Philo* begins to " think himſelf a great Man, and nothing leſs than " the writing of a Play, can ſatisfie his towring " Ambition; well, the Play is writ, the Players, " upon the Recommendation of thoſe that lick'd " it over, like their Parts to a Fondneſs, and the " *Comedy*, or *Tragedy*, being ſupported partly by its " real Merit, but moſt powerfully by a *Toaſting*, " or *Kit-cat-Club*, comes off with univerſal Ap- " plauſe. How *ſlippery* is *Greatneſs*! *Philo* puff'd " up with his Succeſs, writes a ſecond Play, ſcorns " to improve it by the Corrections of better Wits, " brings it upon the Stage, without ſecuring a " Party to protect it, and has the Mortification to " hear it *Hiſt* to death. Pray how many *Philos* " do we reckon in Town ſince the Revolution?

" The reaſon we have had ſo many *ill* " *Plays* of late, is this; The extraordinary *Succeſs* " of the worſt Performances encourages every Pre- " tender to Poetry to Write; Whereas the indiffe- " rent Reception ſome excellent Pieces have met " with, diſcourages our beſt Poets from Wri- " ting.

" After all, one of the boldeſt Attempts of Hu- " man Wit, is to write a taking *Comedy*: For, how " many different ſorts of People, how many va- " rious Palates muſt a Poet pleaſe, to gain a gene- " ral Applauſe? He muſt have a *Plot* and *Deſign*, " *Coherence* and *Unity* of *Action*, *Time* and *Place*, " for the Criticks, *Polite Language* for the Boxes, " *Repartee*, *Humour*, and *Double Entendres* for the " Pit; and to the ſhame of our Theatres, a mix- " ture of Farce for the Galleries, What Man of " Senſe now will venture his Reputation upon theſe " hard Terms

The

" The Poet often arrogates to himſelf the Ap-
" plauſe, which we only give to Mrs. *Barry* or
" *Bracegirdle*'s inimitable Performances: But then
" he muſt take as often upon his Account the Hiſ-
" ſes, which are only intended for *Caſonia*, and *Co-*
" *rinna*'s *abominable Acting*. One makes amends for
" 'tother.

" Many a pert Coxcomb might have paſt for
" a *Wit*, if his Vanity had not brought him to
" *Will*'s.

" The ſame thing that makes a Man appear with
" Aſſurance at *Court*; qualifies him alſo to appear
" unconcern'd among Men of Senſe at *Will*'s: I
" mean *Impertinence*.

" As ſome People *Write*, ſo others *talk themſelves*
" out of their *Reputation*.

* The name of a *Wit*, is little better than a Slan-
der, ſince it is generally given by thoſe that have
none, to thoſe that have *little*.

" How ſtrangely ſome words loſe their Primitive
" Senſe! By a *Critick*, was originally underſtood a
" *good Judge*; with us now-a-days, it ſignifies no
" more than a *Fault-finder*.

* A *Critick* in the Modern Acceptation, ſeldom
riſes, either in *Merit*, or *Reputation*; for it argues
a mean grov'ling Genius, to be always finding Fault;
whereas, a candid Judge of Things, not only im-
proves his Parts, but gains every Body's Eſteem.

*None keep generally worſe Company than your
Eſtabliſh'd *Wits*, for there are a ſort of Coxcombs,
that ſtick continually to them like Burrs, to make
the Town think from their Company, that they
are Men of Parts.

* *Criticks* are uſeful, that's moſt certain, ſo are Executioners and Informers: But what Man did ever envy the condition of *Jack Ketch*, or *Jack P——r.*

* How can we love the Man, whoſe Office is to torture and execute other Men's Reputation.

* After all, a *Critick* is the laſt Refuge of a pretender to *Wit.*

"Tis a great piece of Aſſurance in a profeſt "*Critick* to write *Plays*, for if he does, he muſt ex- "pect to have the whole Club of *Wits*, ſcanning "his Performances with utmoſt Severity, and mag- "nifying his *Slips* into *prodigious Faults.*

* I don't wonder Men of Quality and Eſtate reſort to *Will*'s, for really they make the beſt Figure there; an indifferent thing from 'em, paſſes for a Witty Jeſt, and ſets preſently the whole Company a Laughing. Thus we admire the pert Talk of Children, becauſe we expected nothing from 'em.

"There are many impertinent *Witlings* at "*Will*'s, that's certain; but then your Retailers of "*Politicks*, or of ſecond-hand Wit at *Tom*'s, are ten "times more intolerable.

* *Wits* are generally the moſt dangerous Company a Woman can keep, for their Vanity makes 'em brag of more Favours than they obtain.

"Some Women care not what becomes of their "Honour, ſo they may ſecure the *Reputation* of "their *Wit.*

"Thoſe People generally talk *moſt*, who have "the leaſt to ſay; go to *Will*'s, and you'll hardly "hear the Great *Wycherley* ſpeak two Sentences in "a quarter of an Hour, whilſt *Blatero*, *Hamilus*, "*Turpinus*, and twenty more egregious Coxcombs, "deafen the Company with their Political *Non-* "*ſenſe.*

There

" There are at *Will*'s ſome *Wit-carriers*, whoſe " buſineſs is, to export the fine Things they hear, " from one Room to another, next to a Reciting- " Poet; theſe Fellows are the moſt exquiſite Plague " to a Man of Senſe.

" In ſpight of the intrinſick Merit of *Wit*, we " find it ſeldom brings a Man into the *Favour*, or " even *Company* of the *Great*, and the *Fair*, unleſs " it be for a Laugh and away; never thought on, " but when preſent; nor then neither, for the ſake " of the Man of *Wit*, but their own Diverſion. " The infallible way to ingratiate ones ſelf with " Quality, is that dull and empty Entertainment, " called *Gaming*, for *Picket*, *Ombre*, and *Baſſet*, keep " always Places even for a *quondam Foot-man*, or a " *Drawer* at the *Aſſemblies*, *Apartments*, and *Viſiting-* " *days*. If you loſe, you oblige with your Money; " if you Win, you command with your Fortune; " the *Lord* is your *Bubble*, and the Lady what you " pleaſe to make her.

* *Flattery* of our *Wit*, has the ſame Power over Us, which *Flattery* of *Beauty* has over a Woman; it keeps up that good Opinion of our ſelves which is neceſſary to beget *Aſſurance*; and *Aſſurance* produces ſucceſs both in *Fortune* and *Love*.

* Some Men take as much Pains to perſuade the World that they have *VVit*, as *Bullies* do that they have *Courage*, and generally with the ſame Succeſs; for they ſeldom deceive any one but themſelves.

* Some *pert Coxcombs*, ſo violently affect the Reputation of *Wits*, that not a *French Journal*, *Mercury*, *Farce*, or *Opera*, can eſcape their Pillaging: yet the utmoſt they arrive at, is but a ſort of *Jack-a-lanthorn Wit*, that like the Sun-ſhine which wan-

ton Boys with fragments of Looking-glaſs reflect in Men's Eyes, dazles the Weak-ſighted, and troubles the ſtrong. Theſe are the Muſes *Black-Guard*, that like thoſe of our Camp, tho' they have no ſhare in the Danger or Honour, yet have the greateſt in the Plunder; that indifferently ſtrip all that lie before 'em, dead or alive, Friends or Enemies: Whatever they light on, is *Terra incognita*, and they claim the right of Diſcoverers, that is, of giving their Names to it.

* I think the *Learned*, and *Unlearned Blockhead* pretty Equal: For 'tis all one to me, whether a Man talk *Nonſenſe*, or *Unintelligible Senſe*.

* There is nothing of which we aſſent to ſpeak with more Humility and Indifference than our own *Senſe*; yet nothing of which we think with more Partiality and Preſumption. There have been ſome ſo bold, as to aſſume the Title of the *Oracles* of Reaſon to themſelves, and their own Writings; and we meet with others daily, that think themſelves *Oracles of VVit*. Theſe are the moſt vexatious Animals in the World, that think they have a privilege to torment and plague every Body; but thoſe moſt who have the beſt Reputation for their Wit and Judgment.

* There's ſomewhat that borders upon *Madneſs* in every exalted *VVit*.

* One of the moſt remarkable Fools that reſort to *VVill's*, is the *Fop-Poet*, who is one that has always more Wit in his Pockets than any where elſe, yet ſeldom or never any of his own there. *Æſop*'s Daw was a Type of him, for he makes himſelf fine with the Plunder of all Parties: He is a ſmuggler of Wit, and ſteals *French* Fancies, without paying the cuſtomary Duties:

Verſe

Verſe is his *Manufacture*; for it is more the Labour of his *Fingers*, than his *Brain*: He ſpends much time in *writing*, but ten times more in *reading* what he has written: He asks your Opinion, yet for fear you ſhould not jump with him, tells you his own firſt: He deſires no Favour, yet is diſappointed if he is not Flatter'd, and is always offended at the Truth. He is a *Poetical Haberdaſher of ſmall VVares*, and deals very much in *Novels*, *Madrigals*, *Funeral* and *Love Odes*, *Panegyricks*, *Elegies*, and other Toys of *Parnaſſus*, which he has a Shop ſo well furniſh'd with, that he can fit you with all ſorts in the twinkling of an Eye. He talks much of *VVycherley*, *Garth*, and *Congreve*, and proteſts, he can't help having ſome Reſpect for them, becauſe they have ſo much for him and his Writings, otherwiſe he could make it appear that they underſtand little of Poetry in compariſon of himſelf, but he forbears 'em meerly out of Gratitude and Compaſſion. He is the *Oracle* of thoſe that want *VVit*, and the *Plague* of thoſe that have it; for he haunts their Lodgings, and is more terrible to them than their Duns.

* *Brutus* for want of *VVit*, ſets up for *Criticiſm*; yet has ſo much ambition to be thought a *VVit*, that he lets his Spleen prevail againſt Nature, and turns Poet. In this Capacity he is as juſt to the World as in the other injurious. For, as the *Critick* wrong'd every Body in his Cenſure, and ſnarl'd and grin'd at their Writings, the *Poet* gives 'em opportunity to do themſelves Juſtice, to return the Compliment, and laugh at, or deſpiſe his. He takes his *Malice* for a *Muſe*, and thinks himſelf *Inſpir'd*, when he is only *Poſſeſs'd*, and blown up with a Flatus of *Envy* and *Vanity*. His Works are *Libels* upon others, bnt *Satyrs* upon himſelf; and

and while they bark at Men of *Senſe*, call him Fool that writ 'em. He has a very great Antipathy to his own Species, and hates to ſee a Fool any where but in his Glaſs; for, as he ſays, *they provoke him, and offend his Eyes.* His Fund of Criticiſm, is a ſet of Terms of Art, pick'd out of the *French Criticks*, or their Tranſlators; and his *Poetical Stock*, is a common Place of certain *Forms* and manners of Expreſſion. He writes better in *Verſe* than *Proſe*; for in that there is *Rhime*, in this, neither *Rhime* nor *Reaſon.* He rails both at the *French* Writers, "whom he does not underſtand, and at thoſe *Engliſh* "Authors, whoſe Excellencies he cannot reach; "with him *Voiture* is flat and dull, *Corneille* a "ſtranger to the Paſſions, *Racine*, Starch'd and Af- "fected, *Moliere*, Jejune, *la Fontaine* a poor Teller "of Tales; and even the Divine *Boileau*, little "better than a Plagiary. As for the *Engliſh* Poets, "he treats almoſt with the ſame Freedom; *Shake-* "*ſpear* with him has neither Language nor Man- "ners; *Ben. Johnſon* is a Pedant; *Dryden* little "more than a tolerable Verſifier; *Congreve* a labori- "ous Writer; *Garth*, an indifferent imitator of *Boi-* "*leau.* He traduces *Oldham*, for want of Breeding "and good Manners, without a grain of either, and "ſteals his own Wit to beſpatter him with; but "like an ill Chymiſt, he lets the *Spirit* fly off in the "drawing over and retains only the *Phlegm.* He Cen- "ſures *Cowley* for too much Wit, and corrects him "with none. He is a great Admirer of the incom- "parable *Milton*, but while he fondly endeavours "to imitate his *Sublime*, he is blown up with "*Bombaſt* and *puffy Expreſſions.* He is a great ſtick- "ler for *Euripides Sophocles*, *Horace*, *Virgil*, *Ovid*, "and the reſt of the Ancients; but his ill and "lame Tranſlations of 'em, ridicule thoſe he would

"commend

" commend. He ventures to write for the Play-
" Houſes, but having his ſtol'n, ill-patch'd fuſtian
' Plays Damn'd upon the Stage, he ranſacks *Boſſu*,
" *Rapin*, and *Dacier*, to arraign the ill-taſte of the Town. To compleat himſelf in the Formalities of *Parnaſſus*, he falls in Love, and tells his Miſtreſs in a very pathetick Letter, he is oblig'd to her bright *Beauty* for his Poetry; but if this Damſel prove no more indulgent than his Muſe, his Amour is like to conclude but unluckily.

Demetrius before the Curſe of Poetry had ſeiz'd him, was in a pretty way of *Thriving Buſineſs*, but having lately ſold his Chambers in one of the Inns of Court, and taken a Lodging near the Play-houſe, is now in a fair way of *Starving*. This Gentleman is frequently poſſeſt with Poetick Raptures; and all the Family complains, that he diſturbs 'em at Midnight, by reciting ſome incomparable ſublime Fuſtian of his own Compoſing. When he is in Bed, one wou'd imagine he might be quiet for that Night, but 'tis quite otherwiſe with him; for when a new Thought, as he calls it, comes into his Head, up he gets, ſets it down in Writing, and ſo gradually encreaſes the deteſted Bulk of his Poetick Fooleries, which, Heaven avert it! he threatens to Print. *Demetrius* having had the misfortune of miſcarrying upon the Stage, endeavours to preſerve his unlawful Title to Wit, by bringing all the Dramatick Poets down to his own Level. And wanting Spirit to ſet up for a Critick, turns *Spy* and *Informer* of *Parnaſſus*. He frequents *Apollo*'s Court at *Will*'s, and picks up the freſheſt Intelligence, what Plays are upon the Stocks, what ready to be Launch'd; and if he can be inform'd, from the *Eſtabliſh'd Wits*, of any remarkable Fault in the new Play upon the Bills, he is indefatigably

bly induſtrious in whiſpering it about, to beſpeak its Damnation before its Repreſentation.

* *Curculio* is a Semi-Wit, that has a great *Veneration* for the *Moderns*, and no leſs a *Contempt* for the *Ancients*: But his own ill Compoſures deſtroy the force of his Arguments, and do the Ancients full Juſtice. This Gentleman having had the good Fortune to write a very taking, *undigeſted medly of Comedy* and *Farce*, is ſo puff'd up with his Succeſs, that nothing will ſerve him, but he muſt bring this new *fantaſtick way of writing*, into Eſteem. To compaſs this Noble Deſign, he tells you what a Coxcomb *Ariſtotle* was with his Rules of the *three Unities*; and what a Company of Senſeleſs Pedants the *Scaligers*, *Rapins*, *Boſſu's*, and *Daciers* are. He proves that *Ariſtotle* and *Horace*, knew nothing of *Poetry*; that Common Senſe and Nature were not the ſame in *Athens*, and *Rome*, as they are in *London*; that *Incoherence*, *Irregularity* and *Nonſenſe* are the Chief Perfections of the *Drama*, and, by a neceſſary Conſequence that the *Silent woman*, is below his own Performance.

" *No new Doctrine* in *Religion*, ever got any conſiderable Footing except it was grounded on *Miracles*; Nor any new *Hypotheſis* was ever eſtabliſhed in natural Philoſophy, unleſs it was confirm'd " by *Experience*. The ſame Rule holds, in ſome mea- " ſure, in all Arts and Sciences, particularly in " Dramatick Poetry. It will be a hard matter " for any Man to trump up any new ſet of Pre- " cepts, in oppoſition to thoſe of *Ariſtotle* and " *Horace*, except by following them, he writes " ſeveral approv'd Plays. The great ſucceſs of " the *firſt Part* of the *T---p* was ſufficient I muſt " confeſs, to juſtifie the Authors *Conceit*; But then " the *Exploſion* of the *ſecond* ought to have cur'd him " of it.

Writers

" *Writers* like *Women* ſeldom give one alnother a " good Word; that's moſt certain. Now if the " *Poets* and *Criticks* of all Ages have allowed *So-* " *phocles*, *Euripides*, and *Terence* to have been good " *Dramatick Writers*, and *Ariſtotle* and *Horace* " to have been *judicious Criticks*, ought not their " *Cenſure* to weigh more with Men of Senſe, than " the Fancies, of a Modern Pretender. To be " plain, whoever Diſputes *Ariſtotle* and *Horace*, " Rules does as good as call the *Scaligers*, *Voſſii*, " *Rapins*, *Boſſu's*, *Daciers Corneilles*, *Roſcommons*, *Nor-* *manby's* and *Rymers*, *Blockheads*: A man muſt have a great deal of Aſſurance, to be ſo free with ſuch illuſtrious Judges.

" Of all the modern Dramatick Poets the Author " of the *Trip to the Jubilee* has the leaſt Reaſon " to turn into Ridicule *Ariſtotle* and *Horace*, ſince " 'tis to their *Rules* which he has, in ſome meaſure " followed, that he owed the great ſucceſs of that " Play. Thoſe *Rules* are no thing but a ſtrict imita- " tion of Nature, which is ſtill the ſame in all Ages " and Nations: And becauſe the Characters of " *Wildair*, *Angelica*, *Standard* and *Smuggler* are *natu-* " *ral*, and well purſued, They have juſtly met *with* " *Applauſe*; but then the Characters of *Lurewell* and " *Clincher* Sen. being *out* of *Nature* they have as " juſtly been condemn'd by all the Good Judges.

* Some *Scholars*, tho' by their conſtant Converſation with Antiquity, they may know perfectly the ſenſe of the Learned dead, and be perfect maſters of the Wiſdom, be throughly informed of the State, and nicely skill'd in the Policies of Ages long ſince paſt, yet by their retired and unactive Life, and their neglect of Buſineſs, they are ſuch ſtrangers to the Domeſtick Affairs and manners

of

of their own Country and Times, that they appear like the Ghosts of old *Romans* rais'd by Magick. Talk to them of the *Assyrian* or *Persian* Monarchies of the *Grecian* or *Roman* Commonwealths, they answer like Oracles; They are such finished Statesmen that we should scarce take 'em to have been less than Privy-Councellors to *Semiramis*, Tutors to *Cyrus* the Great, and old Cronies of *Solon*, *Licurgus*, and *Numa Pompilius*. But ingage them in a discourse that concerns the present Times, and their Native Country, and they hardly speaks the language of it; Ask them how many Kings there have been in *England* since the Conquest, or in what Reign the *Reformation* happened, and they'll be puzzled with the Question; They know all the minutest Circumstances of *Catiline*'s Conspiracy, but are hardly acquainted with the late Plot. They'll tell you the Names of such *Romans* as were called to an Account by the Senate for their *Briberies*, *Extortions* and *Depredations*, but know nothing of the four impeached Lords; They talk of the ancient way of Fighting, and warlike Engines, as if they had been Lieutenant Generals under *Alexander*, *Scipio*, *Annibal* or *Julius Cæsar*; but are perfectly ignorant of the modern military Discipline, Fortification and Artillery; and of the very names of *Nassau*, *Condé*, *Turenne*, *Luxembourg*, *Eugene*, *Villeroy* and *Catinat*. They are excellent Guides, and can direct you to every Alley, and Turning in old *Rome* yet lose their way home in their own Parish. They are mighty Admirers of the Wit and Eloquence of the Ancients; Yet had they lived in the Time of *Demosthenes*, and *Cicero*, would have treated them with as much supercilious Pride, and disrespect as they do now the Moderns. They are great Hunters of Ancient Manuscripts, and have in great

great Veneration any thing that has eſcaped the Teeth of Time; and if Age has obliterated the Characters, 'tis the more valuable for not being legible. Theſe Superſtitious bigotted idolaters of time paſt, are children in their Underſtanding all their lives, for they hang ſo inceſſantly upon the leading-ſtrings of Authority, that their Judgments like the Limbs of ſome *Indian* Penitents, become altogether crampt and motionleſs forwant of uſe. In fine, they think it a diſparagemeut of their Learning to talk what other Men underſtand, and will ſcarce believe that two and two make four, under a Demonſtration from *Euclid*, or a *Quotation from Ariſtotle*.

The World ſhall allow a Man to be a wiſe Man, a good Naturaliſt, a good Mathematician, Politician or Poet, but not a *Scholar*, or Learned Man, unleſs he be a Philologer and underſtands Greek and Latin. But for my part I take theſe Gentlemen have juſt inverted the Uſe of the Term, and given that to the Knowledge of Words, which belongs more properly to Things. I take Nature to be the Book of Univerſal Learning, which he that reads beſt in all or any of its Parts, is the greateſt Scholar, the moſt Learned Man; and 'tis as ridiculous for a Man to count himſelf more learned than another, if he have no greater Extent of Knowledge of things, becauſe he is more vers'd in Languages, as it would be for an old fellow to tell a young One, his own Eyes were better than the other's becauſe he reads with ſpectacles. the other without.

* *Impertinence* is a Failing that has its Root in Nature, but is not worth laughing at, till it has received the finiſhing ſtrokes of *Art*. A man thro' natural Defects may do abundance of incoherent fooliſh

fooliſh Actions, yet deſerves compaſſion and Advice rather than deriſion. But to ſee Men ſpending their Fortunes, as well as lives, in a Courſe of regular Folly, and with an induſtrious as well as expenſive idleneſs running thro' tedious ſyſtems of impertinence, would have ſplit the ſides of *Heraclitus*, had it been his Fortune to have been a Spectator. It's very eaſie to decide which of theſe impertinents is the moſt ſignal: the Virtuoſo is manifeſtly without a Competitor. For our follies are not to be meaſured by the Degree of Ignorance that appears in 'em, but by the ſtudy, labour and expence they coſt us to finiſh and compleat 'em.

So that the more Regularity and Artifice there appears in any of our Extravagancies, the greater is the Folly of 'em. Upon this ſcore it is that the laſt mentioned deſervedly claim the Preference to all others. They have improved ſo well their Amuſements into an Art, that the credulous and ignorant are induced to believe there is ſome ſecret Vertue, ſome hidden Myſtery in thoſe darling Toys of theirs: when all their Buſtling amounts to no more than a learned impertinence and all they teach men is but a ſpecious method of throwing away both Time and Money.

" The *Illuſions* of *Poetry* are fatal to none but the " *Poets* themſelves: *Sidonius* having lately miſcarri- " ed upon the Stage, gathers freſh Courage and is " now big with the Hopes of a Play, writ by an " ancient celebrated Author, new-vampt and fut- " biſht up after the laudable Cuſtom of our mo- " dern Witlings. He reckons how much he ſhall " get by his third day, nay, by his ſixth; how " much by the Printing, how much by the Dedica-

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" tion, and by a modeſt Computaion concludes the " whole ſum, will amount to two hundred Pounds, " which are to be diſtributed among his truſty " Duns. But mark the fallacy of *Vanity* and *Self-* " *conceit*: The Play is acted, and caſts the Audi- " ence into ſuch a Lethargy, that They are fain " to damn it with *Yawning*, being in a manner de- " prived of the Uſe of their *hiſſing* Faculty. Well " ſays, *Sidonius*, (after having recover'd from a pro- " found Conſternation) *Now muſt the important Per-* " *ſon ſtand upon his own Leggs.* Right, *Sidonius*, " but when do you come on again, that *Covent-* " *Garden* Doctors may preſcribe your Play inſtead " of Opium?

" The Town is not one jot more diverted by " the Diviſion of the Play-houſes: the *Players* " perform better 'tis true? but then the *Poets* " write worſe; Will the uniting of *Drury-Lane* and " *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields* mend Matters? No, ------for " then what the Town ſhould get in writing, they " would loſe it in Acting.

* A *Dramatick Poet* has as hard a Task on't to manage, as a *paſſive obedience Divine* that preaches before the Commons on the 30 th. of *January*.

To pleaſe the *Pit* and *Galleries* he muſt take care to lard the Dialogue with ſtore of luſcious ſtuff, which the righteous call Baudy; to pleaſe the new Reformers he muſt have none, otherwiſe gruff *Jeremy* will Laſh him in a third *View*.

* I very much Queſtion, after all, whether *Collier* would have been at the Pains to laſh the immoralities of the ſtage, if the Dramatick Poets had not been guilty of the *abominable Sin* of making familiar now and then with the Backſlidings of the Caſſock.

* The *Griping Uſurer*, whoſe daily labour and nightly Care and Study is to oppreſs the Poor, or over-reach his Neighbour, to betray the Truſts his Hypocriſy procured; in ſhort to break all the Poſitive Laws of Morality, crys out, Oh! Diabolical, at a poor harmleſs *Double Entendre* in a Play.

" 'Tis prepoſterous to pretend to reform the " *Stage* before the Nation, and particularly the " Town, is *reform'd*. The Buſineſs of a Dramatick " Poet is to *copy Nature*, and repreſent things as " they are; Let our Peers give over *whoring* and " *drinking*; the Citizens, *Cheating*; the Clergy, their " *Quarrels, Covetouſneſs and Ambition*; the Law- " yers, their *ambi-dextrous dealings*; and the Women " *intriguing*, and the ſtage will reform of Courſe.

" Formerly *Poets* made *Players*, but now adays 'tis " generally the *Player* that makes the *Poet*. How " many Plays would have expired the very firſt " Night of their appearing upon the Stage, but for " *Betterton, Barry, Bracegirdle*, or *Wilks*'s inimitable " Performance.

" Who ever goes about to expoſe the Follies of " others upon the Stage, runs great hazard of expo- " ſing himſelf firſt; and of being made Ridicu- " lous to thoſe very People he endeavours to " make ſo.

" I doubt whether a Man of Senſe would ever " give himſelf the trouble of writing for the " Stage, if he had before his Eyes the fatigue of " Rehearſals, the Pangs and Agonies of the firſt " day his Play is Acted, the Diſappointments of " the third, and the Scandal of a Damn'd " Poet.

" The

" The reaſon why in *Shakeſpear* and *Ben. Johnſon*'s Time Plays had ſo good Succeſs, and that " we ſee now ſo many of 'em miſcarry, is becauſe " then the Poets *wrote better* than the Audience " *Judg'd*; whereas now-a-days the *Audience* judge " *better than the Poets write.*

* He that pretends to confine a Damſel of the Theatre to his own Uſe, who by her Character is a Perſon of an extended Qualification, acts as unrighteous, at leaſt as unnatural, a Part, as he that would Debauch a Nun. But after all, ſuch a Spark rather conſults his *Vanity*, than his *Love*, and would be thought to ingroſs what all the young Coxcombs of the Town admire and covet.

" Is it not a kind of Prodigy, that in this " wicked and cenſorious Age, the ſhining *Daphne* " ſhould preſerve her Reputation in a Play-" Houſe?

The Character of a Player was Infamous amongſt the *Romans*, but with the *Greeks* Honourable: What is our Opinion? We think of them like the *Romans*, and live with them like the *Greeks*.

" Nothing ſo powerfully excites Love in us " Men, as the view of thoſe Limbs of Women's " Bodies, which the Eſtabliſh'd Rules of Modeſty " bid 'em keep from our Sight. No wonder then " if *Aglaura*, *Caſonia*, *Floria*, and in general all " the Women on our Stages, are ſo fond of " acting in Men's Cloaths.

" *Caſonia* is Young, I own it: But then *Caſonia* has an *African* Noſe, hollow Eyes, and a " *French* Complexion; ſo that all the time ſhe

" acted in her Sex's Habit, her Conqueſts never " extended further than one of her Fellow-Play- " ers, or a Caſt-Poet. Mark the Miracles of " Fancy: *Cæſonia* acts a *Boy*'s Part, and *Tallus*, " one of the firſt *Patricians*, falls deſperately in " Love with her, and preſents her with two Hun- " dred great *Seſterces* (a Gentlewoman's Portion) " for a Night's Lodging.

" One would imagine our Matrons ſhould be " mighty Jealous of their Husbands Intriguing " with Players: But no, they bear it with a Chri- " ſtian Patience. How is that poſſible? Why, " they Intrigue themſelves, either with *Roſcius* the " Tragedian, *Flagillus*, the Comedian, or *Bathillus*, " the Dancer.

Nothing Surprizes me more, than to ſee Men Laugh ſo freely at a Comedy, and yet account it a filly weakneſs to Weep at a Tragedy. For is it leſs natural for a Man's Heart to relent upon a Scene of Pity, than to be tranſported with Joy upon one of Mirth and Humour? Or is it only the alteration of the Features of one's Face that makes us forbear Crying? But this alteration is undoubtedly as great in an immoderate Laughter, as in a moſt deſperate Grief; and good Breeding teaches us to avoid the one as well as the other, before thoſe for whom we have a Reſpect. Or is it painful to us to appear tender-hearted and expreſs grief upon a Fiction? But without quoting great Wits who account it an equal Weakneſs, either to weep or laugh out of Meaſure, can we expect to be tickled by a Tragical Adventure? And beſides, is not Truth as naturally repreſented in that as in a Comical one? Therefore as we do not think it ridiculous to ſee a whole Audience laugh at a mer-

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ry jeſt or humour acted to the life, but on the contrary we commend the skill both of the Poet and the Actor; ſo the great Violence we uſe upon our ſelves to contain our tears, together with the forc'd a-wry ſmiles with which we ſtrive to conceal our Concern, do forcibly evince that the natural effect of a good *Tragedy* is to make us all weep by conſent, without any more ado than to pull out our Handkerchiefs to wipe off our Tears. And if it were once agreed amongſt us not to reſiſt thoſe tender impreſſions of *Pity*, I dare engage that we would ſoon be convinc'd that by frequenting the Play-houſe we run leſs danger of being put to the expence of Tears, than of being almoſt frozen to death by many a cold, dull inſipid jeſt.

We muſt make it our main Buſineſs and Study to *think* and *write well*, and not labour to ſubmit other People's Palates and Opinions to our own; which is the greater difficulty of the two.

One ſhould ſerve his time to learn how to make a *Book*, juſt as ſome men do to learn how to make a watch, for there goes ſomething more than either Wit or Learning to the ſetting up for an *Author*. A *Lawyer* of this Town was an able, ſubtle and experienc'd Man in the way of his Buſineſs, and might for ought I know, have come to be *Lord Chief Juſtice*, but he has lately miſcarried in the Good Opinion of the World, only by Printing ſome Eſſays which are a Maſter-piece----in *Nonſenſe*.

It is a more difficult matter to get a Name by a *Perfect Compoſure*, than to make an *indifferent* one valued by that Reputation a Man has already got in the World.

There are ſome things which admit of no *mediocrity*; ſuch as *Poetry*, *Painting*, *Muſick and Oratory*—— What Torture can be greater than to hear Doctor *F*----- declaim a flat Oration with formality and Pomp, or D---- read his Pyndaricks with all the Emphaſis of a *Dull Poet*.

We have not as yet ſeen any excellent Piece, but what is owing to the Labour of one ſingle Man: *Homer*, for the purpoſe, has writ the *Iliad*; *Virgil*, the *Æneid*; *Livy* his *Decads*; and the *Roman* Orator his Orations; but our *modern ſeveral Hands* preſent us often with nothing but a *Variety of Errors*.

There is in the Arts and Sciences ſuch a *Point of Perfection*, as there is one of *Goodneſs* or *maturity* in Fruits; and he that can find and reliſh it muſt be allowed to have a *True Taſt*; but on the contrary, he that neither perceives it, nor likes any thing on this ſide, or beyond it, has but a defective Palate. Hence I conclude that there is a bad *Taſte* and a *good* one, and that the diſputing about *Taſtes* is not altogether unreaſonable.

The Lives of *Heroes* have enricht *Hiſtory* and Hiſtory in requital has embelliſhed and heightened the Lives of *Heroes*, ſo that it is no eaſie matter to determine which of the two is more beholden to the other: either *Hiſtorians*, to thoſe who have furniſhed them with ſo great and noble a matter to work upon; or thoſe great Men, to thoſe Writers that have convey'd their names and Atchievements down to the *Admiration of after-Ages*.

There are many of our *Wits* that feed for a while upon the *Ancients*, and the beſt of our Modern Authors:

Authors: and when they have *ſqueez'd* out and *extracted* matter enough to appear in Print and ſet up for themſelves, moſt ungratefully abuſe them, like children grown ſtrong and luſty by the good milk they have ſucked, who generally beat their Nurſes.

A *Modern* Author proves both by Reaſons and Examples that the *Ancients* are inferior to us; and fetches his Arguments from his own particular Taſt, and his Examples from his own *Writings*. He owns, That the *Ancients* tho' generally uneven and uncorrect, have yet here and there ſome fine Touches, and indeed theſe are ſo fine, that the quoting of them is the only thing that makes his *Criticiſms* worth a Mans reading 'em.

Some great Men pronounce for the *Ancients* againſt the *Moderns*: But their own Compoſures are ſo agreeable to the Taſte of Antiquity, and bear ſo great a reſemblance with the Patterns they have left us, that they ſeem to be judges in their own Caſe and being ſuſpected of Partiality, are therefore *ceptionable*.

It is the Character of a *Pedant* to be unwilling either to ask a Friend's advice about his Work or to alter what he has been made ſenſible to be a fault.

We ought to read our Writings to thoſe only, who have Judgment enough to correct what is amiſs, and eſteem what deſerves to be commended.

An *Author*, ought to receive with an equal Modeſty both the Praiſe and Cenſure of other People upon his own Works.

A great facility in ſubmitting to other People's Cenſure is ſometimes as faulty as a great rough-

neſs in rejecting it: for there is no Compoſure ſo every way accompliſht, but what would be pared and clipped to nothing if a man would follow the advice of every finical ſcrupulous Critick, who often would have the beſt Things left out becauſe forſooth, they are not agreeable to his dull Palate.

The great Pleaſure ſome People take in *criticizing* upon the *ſmall Faults* of a Book ſo vitiates their Taſte, that it renders them unfit to be *affected* with it's *Beauties*.

The ſame Niceneſs of Judgment which makes ſome Men write ſence, makes them very often ſhy and unwilling to appear in Print.

Among the ſeveral *Expreſſions* We may uſe for the ſame Thought, there is but an individual one which is good and proper; any other but that is flat and imperfect, and cannot pleaſe an ingenious Man that has a mind to explain what he thinks: And it is no ſmall wonder to me to conſider, what Pains, even the beſt of Writers are ſometimes at, to ſeek out that Expreſſion, which being the moſt ſimple and natural, ought conſequently to have preſented it ſelf without Study.

'Tis to no great purpoſe that a Man ſeeks to make himſelf admir'd by his Compoſures: Blockheads, indeed, may oftentimes admire him but then they are but Blockheads; and as for *Wits* they have in themſelves the ſeeds or hints of all the good and fine things that can poſſibly be thought of or ſaid, and therefore they ſeldom admire any thing, but only approve of what hits their Palate.

The being a *Critick* is not ſo much a Science as a ſort of laborious, and painful Employment, which requires

requires more ſtrength of Body, than delicacy of Wit, and more aſſiduity than natural Parts.

As ſome merit Praiſe for writing well, ſo do others for not writing at all.

That *Author* who chiefly endeavours to pleaſe the Taſte of the Age he lives in, rather conſults his private intereſt, than that of his *Writings*. We ought always to have perfection in Proſpect as the chief thing we aim at, and that Point once gain'd, we may reſt aſſured that unbyaſſed *Poſterity* will do us Juſtice, which is often deny'd us by our *Contemporaries*.

'Tis matter of diſcretion in an Author to be extreamly reſerv'd and modeſt when he ſpeaks of the Work he is upon, for fear he ſhould raiſe the World's Expectation too high: For it is moſt certain, that our Opinion of an extraordinary Promiſe, goes always further than the Performance, and a Man's Reputation cannot but be much leſſen'd by ſuch a Diſparity.

The Name of the *Author* ought to be the laſt thing we inquire into, when we Judge of the merit of an ingenious Compoſure, but contrary to this maxim we generally judge of the *Book* by the *Author*, inſtead of judging of the *Author* by the *Book*.

As we ſee Women that without the knowledge of Men do ſometimes bring forth inanimate and formleſs lumps of Fleſh, but to cauſe a natural and perfect Generation, they are to be husbanded by another kind of ſeed, even ſo it is with Wit which if not applied to ſome certaing ſtudy that may fix and reſtrain it, runs into a thouſand Extravagancies, and is eternally roving here and there in the inextricable labyrinth of reſtleſs Imagination.

If every one who hears or reads a good Sentence

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or maxim, would immediately conſider how it does any way touch his own private concern, he would ſoon find, that it was not ſo much a good ſaying, as a ſevere laſh to the ordinary Beſtiality of his judgment: but Men receive the Precepts and admonitions of Truth as generally directed to the common ſort and never particularly to themſelves, and inſtead of applying them to their own manners, do only very ignorantly and unprofitably commit them to Memory, without ſuffering themſelves to be at all inſtructed, or converted by them.

We ſay of ſome compoſitions that they ſtink of Oil and ſmell of the Lamp, by reaſon of a certain rough harſhneſs that the laborious handling imprints upon thoſe, where great force has been employed: but beſides this, the ſolicitude of doing well, and a certain ſtriving and contending of a mind too far ſtrain'd, and over-bent upon its undertaking, breaks and hinders it ſelf, like Water that by force of its own preſſing Violence and Abundance cannot find a ready iſſue through the neck of a Bottle, or a narrow ſluice.

Humour, Temper, Education and a thouſand other Circumſtances create ſo great a difference betwixt the ſeveral Palates of Men, and their Judgments upon ingenious Compoſures, that nothing can be more chimerical and fooliſh in an Author than the Ambition of a general Reputation.

As Plants are ſuffocated and drown'd with too much nouriſhment, and Lamps with too much Oyl, ſo is the active part of the underſtanding with too much ſtudy and matter, which being embaraſs'd and confounded with the Diverſity of things is deprived of the force and power to diſin-

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gage it ſelf; and by the Preſſure of this weight, it is bow'd, ſubjected and rendred of no uſe.

* Studious and inquiſitive Men commonly at forty or fifty at the moſt, have fixed and ſettled their judgments in moſt Points, and as it were made their laſt underſtanding, ſuppoſing they have thought, or read, or heard what can be ſaid on all ſides of things, and after that they grow poſitive and impatient of Contradiction, thinking it a diſparagement to them to alter their Judgment.

All Skillful Maſters ought to have a care not to let their Works be ſeen in *Embryo*, for all beginnings are defective, and the imagination is always prejudiced. The remembring to have ſeen a thing imperfect takes from one the Liberty of thinking it pretty when it is finiſhed.

Many fetch a tedious Compaſs of Words, without ever coming to the Knot of the buſineſs: they make a thouſand turnings and windings, that tire themſelves and others, without ever arriving at the Point of importance. That proceeds from the Confuſion of their Underſtanding, which cannot clear it ſelf. They loſe Time and Patience in what ought to be let alone, and then they have no more to beſtow upon what they have omitted.

It is the Knack of Men of Wit to find out Evaſions; With a touch of Gallantry they extricate themſelves out of the greateſt Labyrinth. A graceful ſmile will make them avoid the moſt dangerous Quarrel.

Women

Mind, Underſtanding, Wit, Memory, Heart.

THE Strength and Weakneſs of a Man's Mind, are improper Terms, ſince they are really nothing elſe but the *Organs* of our *Bodies*, being well or ill diſpos'd.

'Tis a great Errour, the making a difference between the *Wit* and the *Judgment*: For, in truth, the *Judgment* is nothiug elſe but the *Brightneſs of Wit*, which penetrates into the very bottom of Things, obſerves all that ought to be obſerv'd there, and deſcries what ſeem'd to be imperceptible. From whence we muſt conclude, That 'tis the *Extention* and *Energy* of this *Light* of *Wit*, that produces all thoſe Effects, uſually aſcrib'd to *Judgment*.

All Men may be allow'd to give a good Character of their *Hearts* (or *Inclinations*) but no body dares to ſpeak well of his own *Wit*.

Polite Wit conſiſts in nice, curious, and honeſt *Thoughts*.

The *Gallantry* of *Wit* conſiſts in *Flattery* well couch'd.

It often happens, that ſome things offer themſelves to our *Wit*, which are naturally finer and better, than is poſſible for a Man to make them by the Additions of *Art* and *Study*.

Wit is always made a *Cully* to the *Heart*.

Many People are acquainted with their own *Wit*, that are not acquainted with their own *Heart*.

It is not in the power of *Wit*, to act a long while the *Part* of the *Heart*.

A Man of *Wit* would be ſometimes miſerably at a loſs, but for the Company of *Fools*.

A Man of *Wit* may ſometimes be a *Coxcomb*; but a Man of *Judgment* never can.

The different Ways or Methods for compaſſing a Deſign, come not ſo much from the Quickneſs and Fertility of an induſtrious *Wit*, as a dim-ſighted *Underſtanding*, which makes us pitch upon every freſh Matter that preſents it ſelf to our groping *Fancy*, and does not furniſh us with Judgment ſufficient to diſcern at firſt ſight, which of them is beſt for our Purpoſe.

The *Twang* of a Man's *Native Country*, ſticks by him as much in his *Mind* and *Diſpoſition*, as it does in his *Tone* of *Speaking*.

Wit ſerves ſometimes to make us play the *Fool* with greater Confidence.

Shallow *Wits* are apt to cenſure every thing above their own *Capacity*.

'Tis paſt the Power of *Imagination* it ſelf, to invent ſo many diſtant *Contrarieties*, as there are naturally in the *Heart* of every Man.

No body is ſo well acquainted with himſelf, as to know his own *Mind* at all times.

Every body complains of his *Memory*, but no body of his *Judgment*.

There is a kind of general *Revolution*, not more viſible in the turn it gives to the Fortunes of the *World*, than it is in the Change of Men's *Underſtandings*, and the different Reliſh or *Wit*.

Men

Men often think to conduct and govern themſelves, when all the while they are led and manag'd; and while their *Underſtanding* aims at one thing, their *Heart* inſenſibly draws them into another.

Great *Souls* are not diſtinguiſh'd by having leſs *Paſſion*, and more *Virtue*; but by having nobler and greater Deſigns than the *Vulgar*.

We allow few Men to be either *Witty* or Reaſonable, beſides thoſe who are of our own Opinion.

We are as much pleas'd to diſcover another Man's *Mind*, as we are diſcontented to have our own found out.

A ſtraight and well-contriv'd *Mind*, finds it eaſier to yield to a perverſe one, than to direct and manage it.

Coxcombs are never ſo troubleſome, as when they pretend to *Wit*.

A little *Wit* with *Diſcretion*, tires leſs at long-ruu, than much *Wit* without *Judgment*.

Nothing comes amiſs to a great *Soul*; and there is as much *Wiſdom* in bearing other People's *Defects*, as in reliſhing their good *Qualities*.

It argues a great heighth of *Judgment* in a Man, to diſcover what is in another's Breaſt, and to conceal what is in his own.

If Poverty be the Mother of Wickedneſs, want of *Wit* muſt be the Father.

* A *Mind* that has no Ballance in it ſelf, turns inſolent, or abject, out of meaſure, with the various Change of Fortune.

* Our

* Our *Memories* are frail and treacherous; and we think many excellent things, which for want of making a deep impreſſion, we can never recover afterwards. In vain we hunt for the ſtragling *Ideæ*, and rummage all the Solitudes and Retirements of our Soul, for a loſt Thought, which has left no Track or Foot-ſteps behind it: The ſwift Off-ſpring of the Mind is gone; 'tis dead as ſoon as born; nay, often proves abortive in the moment it was conceiv'd: The only way therefore to retain our Thoughts, is to faſten them in Words, and chain them in Writing.

* A Man is never ſo great a *Dunce* by *Nature*, but *Love*, *Malice*, or *Neceſſity*, will ſupply him with ſome *Wit*.

* There is a *Defect* which is almoſt unavoidable in great *Inventors*; it is the Cuſtom of ſuch earneſt and powerful Minds, to do wonderful Things in the beginning; but ſhortly after, to be over-born by the Multitude and Weight of their own Thoughts; then to yield and cool by little and little, and at laſt grow weary, and even to loath that, upon which they were at firſt the moſt eager. This is the wonted Conſtitution of *great Wits*; ſuch tender things are thoſe exalted Actions of the Mind; and ſo hard it is for thoſe Imaginations, that can run ſwift and mighty Races, to be able to travel a long and conſtant Journey. The Effects of this Infirmity have been ſo remarkable, that we have certianly loſt very many Inventions, after they have been in part faſhion'd, by the meer *Languiſhing* and *Negligence* of their *Authors*.